



U.S. Department of Justice

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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PRESS RELEASE
***McNEAL PLEADS GUILTY
TO ARMED BANK ROBBERIES
IN LAYTON, MIDVALE, AND SANDY***

SALT LAKE CITY -- Willie McNeal, age 50, of Midvale pleaded guilty in federal court this afternoon to three counts of armed bank robbery in connection with three bank robberies in October, November, and December 2006.

U.S. District Judge Dale A. Kimball set sentencing for Aug. 1, 2007, at 2:30 p.m. McNeal faces up to 25 years in federal prison for each bank robbery.

A second defendant in the case, William Harrison, age 40, of Salt Lake City, is scheduled to start a five-day trial on July 16, 2007, in Judge Kimball's courtroom. In addition to the bank robberies, Harrison also is charged with three counts of discharging a firearm during a crime of violence. A conviction on the firearms counts would carry mandatory minimum sentences. The first count would be 10 years. Each subsequent count of conviction would be a 25-year mandatory minimum sentence. Each of the mandatory minimum sentences must be served consecutive and at the end of any other sentence. (As charged, Harrison faces 60 years in federal

prison for three counts of discharging a firearm during a crime of violence -- 10+25+25 -- in addition to the potential sentence for the bank robbery counts. Defendants charged in indictments are presumed innocent unless or until proven guilty in court.

As a part of a plea agreement reached with federal prosecutors, McNeal admitted that he participated in the three bank robberies on Oct. 2, Nov. 1, and Dec. 1, 2006. McNeal said Harrison entered the institutions and discharged a firearm before demanding money, while his role was to assist with getting away following the robberies.

Harrison and McNeal were indicted by a federal grand jury in January. The indictment charged them with taking about \$11,792 from Mountain America Credit Union in Layton during an Oct. 2, 2006, robbery; \$1,041 during a Nov. 1, 2006, robbery of Chase Bank in Midvale; and \$6,198 during a Dec. 1, 2006, robbery of Cyprus Credit Union in Sandy. It also charged Harrison with three counts of discharging a firearm during a crime of violence.

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